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IMAGES OF RELATIONSHIP¹

CAROL GILLIGAN²

In 1914, with his essay "On Narcissism", Freud swallows his distaste at the thought of "abandoning observation for barren theoretical controversy" and extends his map of the psychological domain. Tracing the development of the capacity to love, which he equates with maturity and psychic health, he locates its origins in the contrast between love for the mother and love for the self. But in thus dividing the world of love into narcissism and "object" relationships, he finds that while men's development becomes clearer, women's becomes increasingly opaque. The problem arises because the contrast between mother and self yields two different images of relationships. Relying on the imagery of men's lives in charting the course of human growth, Freud is unable to trace in women the development of relationships, morality, or a clear sense of self. This difficulty in fitting the logic of his theory to women's experience leads him in the end to set women apart, marking their relationships, like their sexual life, as "a dark continent" for psychology" (1926, p. 212).

Thus the problem of interpretation that shadows the understanding of women's development arises from the differences observed in their experience of relationships. To Freud, though living surrounded by women and otherwise seeing so much and so well, women's relationships seemed increasingly mysterious, difficult to discern, and hard to describe. While this mystery indicates how theory can blind observation, it also suggests that development in women is masked by a particular conception of human relationships. Since the imagery of relationships shapes the narrative of

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2. Carol Gilligan is one of the United States' most distinguished writers and teachers in the field of psychology. She earned her Ph.D. from Harvard where she was a member of the faculty for 34 years. She initiated the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development and coauthored or edited five books with her students, including *Meeting At The Crossroads*. Her 1982 book, *In A Different Voice*, has been translated into eighteen languages. Her most recent book is *The Birth of Pleasure*. Dr. Gilligan, University Professor at New York University, is Affiliated Faculty at NYU School of Law. She leads workshops for faculty in the law school's Lawyering Program, an innovative curriculum designed to encourage first year students to think critically about work in the law.

human development, the inclusion of women, by changing the imagery, implies a change in the entire account.

The shift in imagery that creates the problem in interpreting women's development is elucidated by the moral judgments of two eleven-year-old children, a boy and a girl, who see, in the same dilemma, two very different moral problems. While current theory brightly illuminates the line and logic of the boy's thought, it cast scant light on that of the girl. The choice of a girl whose moral judgments elude existing categories of developmental assessment is meant to highlight the issue of interpretation rather than to exemplify sex differences *per se*. Adding a new line of interpretation, based on the imagery of the girl's thought, makes it possible not only to see development where previously development was not discerned but also to consider differences in the understanding of relationships without scaling these differences from better to worse.

The two children were in the same sixth-grade class at school and were participants in the rights and responsibilities study, designed to explore different conceptions of morality and self. The sample selected for this study was chosen to focus the variables of gender and age while maximizing developmental potential by holding constant, at a high level, the factors of intelligence, education, and social class that have been associated with moral development, at least as measured by existing scales. The two children in question, Amy and Jake, were both bright and articulate and, at least in their eleven-year-old aspirations, resisted easy categories of sex-role stereotyping, since Amy aspired to become a scientist while Jake preferred English to math. Yet their moral judgments seem initially to confirm familiar notions about differences between the sexes, suggesting that the edge girls have on moral development during the early school years gives way at puberty with the ascendance of formal logical thought in boys.

The dilemma that these eleven-year-olds were asked to resolve was one in the series devised by Kohlberg to measure moral development in adolescence by presenting a conflict between moral norms and exploring the logic of its resolution. In this particular dilemma, a man named Heinz considers whether or not to steal a drug which he cannot afford to buy in order to save the life of his wife. In the standard format of Kohlberg's interviewing procedure, the description of the dilemma itself—Heinz's predicament, the wife's disease, the druggist's refusal to lower his price—is followed by the question, "Should Heinz steal the drug?" The reasons for and against stealing are then explored through a series of questions that vary and extend the parameters of the dilemma in a way designed to reveal the underlying structure of moral thought.

Jake, at eleven, is clear from the outset that Heinz should steal the drug. Constructing the dilemma, as Kohlberg did, as a conflict between the values of property and life, he discerns the logical priority of life and uses that logic to justify his choice:

For one thing, a human life is worth more than money, and if the druggist only makes \$1,000, he is still going to live, but if Heinz doesn't steal the drug, his wife is going to die. (*Why is life worth more than money?*) Because the druggist can get a thousand dollars later from rich people with cancer, but Heinz can't get his wife again. (*Why not?*) Because people are all different and so you couldn't get Heinz's wife again.

Asked whether Heinz should steal the drug if he does not love his wife, Jake replies that he should, saying that not only is there "a difference between hating and killing," but also, if Heinz were caught, "the judge would probably think it was the right thing to do." Asked about the fact that, in stealing, Heinz would be breaking the law, he says that "laws have mistakes, and you can't go writing up a law for everything that you can imagine."

Thus, while taking the law into account and recognizing its function in maintaining social order (the judge, Jake says, "should give Heinz the lightest possible sentence"), he also sees the law as man-made and therefore subject to error and change. Yet his judgment that Heinz should steal the drug, like his view of the law as having mistakes, rests on the assumption of agreement, a societal consensus around moral values that allows one to know and expect others to recognize what is "the right thing to do."

Fascinated by the power of logic, this eleven-year-old boy locates truth in math, which, he says, is "the only thing that is totally logical." Considering the moral dilemma to be "sort of like a math problem with humans," he sets it up as an equation and proceeds to work out the solution. Since his solution is rationally derived, he assumes that anyone following reason would arrive at the same conclusion and thus that a judge would also consider stealing to be the right thing for Heinz to do. Yet he is also aware of the limits of logic. Asked whether there is a right answer to the moral problems, Jake replies that "there can only be right and wrong in judgment," since the parameters of action are variable and complex. Illustrating how actions undertaken with the best of intentions can eventuate in the most disastrous of consequences, he says, "like if you give an old lady your seat on the trolley, if you are in a trolley crash and that seat goes through the window, it might be that reason that the old lady dies,"

Theories of developmental psychology illuminate well the position of this child, standing at the juncture of childhood and adolescence, at what Piaget describes as the pinnacle of childhood intelligence, and beginning through thought to discover a wider universe of possibility. The moment of preadolescence is caught by the conjunction of formal operational thought with a description of self still anchored in the factual parameters of his childhood world—his age, his town, his father's occupation, the substance of his likes, dislikes, and beliefs. Yet as his self-description radiates the self-confidence of a child who has arrived, in Erikson's terms, at a favorable balance of industry over inferiority—competent, sure of himself, and knowing well the rules of the game—so his emergent capacity for formal thought, his ability to think about thinking and to reason things out in a logical way, frees him from dependence on authority and allows him to find solutions to problems by himself.

This emergent autonomy follows the trajectory that Kohlberg's six stages of moral development trace, a three-level progression from an ego-centric understanding of fairness based on individual need (stages one and two), to a conception of fairness anchored in the shared conventions of societal agreement (stages three and four), and finally to a principled understanding of fairness that rests on the free-standing logic of equality and reciprocity (stages five and six). While this boy's judgments at eleven are scored as conventional on Kohlberg's scale, a mixture of stages three and four, his ability to bring deductive logic to bear on the solution of moral dilemmas, to differentiate morality from law, and to see how laws can be considered to have mistakes points toward the principled conception of justice that Kohlberg equates with moral maturity.

In contrast, Amy's response to the dilemma conveys a very different impression, an image of development stunted by a failure of logic, an inability to think for herself. Asked if Heinz should steal the drug, she replies in a way that seems evasive and unsure:

Well, I don't think so. I think there might be other ways besides stealing it, like if he could borrow the money or make a loan or something, but he really shouldn't steal the drug—but his wife shouldn't die either.

Asked why he should not steal the drug, she considers neither the property nor the law but rather the effect that theft could have on the relationship between Heinz and his wife:

If he stole the drug, he might have save his wife then, but if he did, he might have to go to jail, and then his wife might get sicker again, and he couldn't get more of the drug, and it might not be

good. So, they should really just talk it out and find some other way to make the money.

Seeing in the dilemma not a math problem with humans but a narrative of relationships that extends over time, Amy envisions the wife's continuing need for her husband and husband's continuing concern for his wife and seeks to respond to the druggist's need in a way that would sustain rather than sever connection. Just as she ties the wife's survival to the preservation of relationships, so she considers the value of the wife's life in a context of relationships, saying it would be wrong to let her die because, "if she died, it hurts a lot of people and it hurts her." Since Amy's moral judgment is grounded in the belief that, "if somebody has something that would keep somebody alive, then it's not right not to give it to them," she considers the problem in the dilemma to arise not from the druggist's assertion of rights but from his failure of response.

As the interviewer proceeds with the series of questions that follow from Kohlberg's construction of the dilemma, Amy's answers remain essentially unchanged, the various probes serving neither to elucidate nor to modify her initial response. Whether or not Heinz loves his wife, he still shouldn't steal or let her die; if it were a stranger dying instead, Amy says that "if the stranger didn't have anybody near or anyone she know," then Heinz should try to save her life, but he should not steal the drug. But as the interviewer conveys through the repetition of questions that the answers she gave were not heard or not right, Amy's confidence begins to diminish, and her replies become more constrained and unsure. Asked again why Heinz should not steal the drug, she simply repeats, "Because it's not right." Asked again to explain why, she states again that theft would not be a good solution, adding lamely, "if he took it, he might not know how to give it to his wife, and so his wife might still die." Failing to see the dilemma as a self-contained problem in moral logic, she does not discern the internal structure of its resolution; as she constructs the problem differently herself, Kohlberg's conception completely evades her.

Instead, seeing a world comprised of relationships rather than of people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection rather than through systems of rules, she finds the puzzle in the dilemma to lie in the failure of the druggist to respond to the wife. Saying that "it is not right for someone to die when their life could be saved," she assumes that if the druggist were to see the consequences of his refusal to lower his price, he would realize that "he should just give it to the wife and then have the husband pay back the money later." Thus she considers the solution to the dilemma to lie in making the wife's condition more salient to the druggist or, that failing, in appealing to others who are in a position to help.

Just as Jake is confident the judge would agree that stealing is the right thing for Heinz to do, so Amy is confident that, "if Heinz and the druggist had talked it out long enough, they could reach something besides stealing." As he considers the law to "have mistakes," so she sees this drama as a mistake, believing that "the world should just share things more and then people wouldn't have to steal." Both children thus recognize the need for agreement but see it as mediated in different ways—he impersonally through systems of logic and law, she personally through communication in relationship. Just as he relies on the conventions of logic to deduce the solution to this dilemma, assuming these conventions to be shared, so she relies on a process of communication, assuming connection and believing that her voice will be heard. Yet while his assumptions about agreement are confirmed by the convergence in logic between his answers and the questions posed, her assumptions are belied by the failure of communication, the interviewer's inability to understand her response.

Although the frustration of the interview with Amy is apparent in the repetition of questions and its ultimate circularity, the problem of interpretation in the light of Kohlberg's definition of the stages and sequence of moral development, her moral judgments appear to be a full stage lower in maturity than those of the boy. Scored as mixture of stages two and three, her responses seem to reveal a feeling of powerlessness in the world, an inability to think systematically about the concepts of morality or law, a reluctance to challenge authority or to examine the logic of received moral truths, a failure even to conceive of acting directly to save a life or to consider that such action, if taken, could possibly have an effect. As her reliance on relationships seems to reveal a continuing dependence and vulnerability, so her belief in communication as the mode through which to resolve moral dilemmas appears naïve and cognitively immature.

Yet Amy's description of herself conveys a markedly different impression. Once again, the hallmarks of the preadolescent child depict a child secure in her sense of herself, confident in the substance of her beliefs, and sure of her ability to do something of value in the world. Describing herself at eleven as "growing and changing," she says that she "sees some things differently now, just because I know myself really well now, and I know a lot more about the world." Yet the world she knows is a different world from that refracted by Kohlberg's construction of Heinz's dilemma. Her world is a world of relationships and psychological truths where an awareness of the connection between people gives rise to a recognition of responsibility for one another, a perception of the need for response. Seen in this light, her understanding of morality as arising from the recognition of relationship, her belief in communication as the mode of conflict

resolution, and her conviction that the solution to the dilemma will follow from its compelling representation seem far from naïve or cognitively immature. Instead, Amy's judgments contain the insights central to an ethic of care, just as Jake's judgments reflect the logic of the justice approach. Her incipient awareness of the "method of truth," the central tenet of nonviolent conflict resolution, and her belief in the restorative activity of care, lead her to see the actors in the dilemma arrayed not as opponents in a contest of rights but as members of a network of relationships on whose continuation they all depend. Consequently her solution to the dilemma lies in activating the network by communication, securing the inclusion of the wife by strengthening rather than severing connections.

But the different logic of Amy's response calls attention to the interpretation of the interview itself. Conceived as an interrogation, it appears instead as a dialogue, which takes on moral dimensions of its own, pertaining to the interviewer's uses of power and to the manifestations of respect. With this shift in the conception of the interview, it immediately becomes clear that the interviewer's problem in understanding Amy's response stems from the fact that Amy is answering a different question from the one the interviewer thought had been posed. Amy is considering not whether Heinz should act in this situation ("*should* Heinz steal the drug?") but rather *how* Heinz should act in response to his awareness of his wife's need ("Should Heinz *steal* the drug?"). The interviewer takes the mode of action for granted, presuming it to be a matter of fact; Amy assumes the necessity for action and considers what form it should take. In the interviewer's failure to imagine a response not dreamt of in Kohlberg's moral philosophy lies the failure to hear Amy's question and to see the logic in her response, to discern that what appears, from one perspective, to be an evasion of the dilemma signifies in other terms a recognition of the problem and a search for a more adequate solution.

Thus in Heinz's dilemma these two children see two very different moral problems—Jake a conflict between life and property that can be resolved by logical deduction, Amy a fracture of human relationship that must be mended with its own thread. Asking different questions that arise from different conceptions of the moral domain, the children arrive at answers that fundamentally diverge, and the arrangement of these answers as successive stages on a scale of increasing moral maturity calibrated by the logic of the boy's response misses the different truth revealed in the judgment of the girl. To the question, "What does he see that she does not?" Kohlberg's theory has nothing to say. Since most of her responses appear from his perspective to lie outside the moral domain.

Yet, just as Jake reveals a sophisticated understanding of the logic of justification, so Amy is equally sophisticated in her understanding of the nature of choice. Recognizing that “if both the roads went in totally separate ways, if you pick one, you’ll never know what would happen if you went the other way,” she explains that “that’s the chance you have to take, and like I said, it’s just really a guess.” To illustrate her point “in a simple way,” she describes her choice to spend the summer at camp:

I will never know what would have happened if I had stayed here, and if something goes wrong at camp, I’ll never know if I stayed here if it would have been better. There’s really no way around it because there’s no way you can do both at once, so you’ve got to decide, but you’ll never know.

In this way, these two eleven-year-old children, both highly intelligent and perceptive about life, though in different ways, display different modes of moral understanding, different ways of thinking about conflict and choice. In resolving Heinz’s dilemma, Jake relies on theft to avoid confrontation and turns to the law to mediate the dispute. Transposing a hierarchy of power in to a hierarchy of values, he defuses a potentially explosive conflict between people by casting it as an impersonal conflict of claims. In this way, he abstracts the moral problem from the interpersonal situation, finding in the logic of fairness an objective way to decide who will win the dispute. But this hierarchical ordering, with its imagery of winning and losing and the potential for violence which it contains, gives way in Amy’s construction of the dilemma to a network of connection, a web of relationships that is sustained by a process of communication. With this shift, the moral problem changes from one of unfair domination, the imposition of property over life, to one of unnecessary exclusion, the failure of the druggist to respond to the wife.

This shift in the formulation of the moral problem and the concomitant change in the imagery of relationships appear in the responses of two eight-year-old children, Jeffrey and Karen, asked to describe a situation in which they were not sure what was the right thing to do:

Jeffrey

When I really want to go to my friends and my mother is cleaning the cellar, I think about my friends, and then I think about my mother, and then I think about the right thing to do. (*But how do you know it’s the right thing to do?*) Because some things go before other things.

Karen

I have a lot of friends, and I can't always play with all of them, so everybody's going to have to take a turn, because they're all my friends. But like if someone's all alone, I'll play with them. (*What kinds of things do you think about when you are trying to make that decision?*) Um, someone all alone, loneliness.

While Jeffrey sets up a hierarchical ordering to resolve a conflict between desire and duty, Karen describes a network of relationships that includes all of her friends. Both children deal with the issues of exclusion and priority created by choice, but while Jeffrey thinks about what goes first, Karen focuses on who is left out.

The contrasting images of hierarchy and network in children's thinking about moral conflict and choice illuminate two views of morality which are complementary rather than sequential or opposed. But this construction of differences goes against the bias of developmental theory toward ordering differences in a hierarchical mode. The correspondence between the order of developmental theory and the structure of the boys' thought contrasts with the disparity between existing theory and the structure manifest in the thought of the girls. Yet in neither comparison does one child's judgment appear as a precursor of the other's position. Thus, questions arise concerning the relation between these perspectives: what is the significance of this difference, and how do these two modes of thinking connect? These questions are elucidated by considering the relationship between the eleven-year-old children's understanding of morality and their descriptions of themselves:

(How would you describe yourself to yourself?)

Jake

Perfect. That's my conceited side. What do you want—any way that I choose to describe myself?

Amy

You mean my character? (*What do you think?*) Well, I don't know. I'd describe myself as, well, what do you mean?

(If you had to describe the person you are in a way that you yourself would know it was you, what would you say?)

Jake

I'd start off with eleven years old. Jake [last name]. I'd have to add that I live in [town], because that is a big part of me, and also that my father is a doctor, because I think that does change me a

little bit, and that I don't believe in crime, except for when your name is Heinz; that I think school is boring, because I think that kind of changes your character a little bit. I don't sort of know how to describe myself, because I don't know how to read my personality. (*If you had to describe the way you actually would describe yourself, what would you say?*) I like corny jokes. I don't really like to get down to work, but I can do all the stuff in school. Every single problem that I have seen in school I have been able to do, except for the ones that take knowledge, and after I do the reading, I have been able to do them, but sometimes I don't want to waste my time on easy homework. And also I'm crazy about sports. I think, unlike a lot of people, that the world still has hope. . . . Most people that I know I like, and I have the good life, pretty much as good as any I have seen, and I am tall for my age.

Amy

Well, I'd say that I was someone who likes school and studying, and that's what I want to do with my life. I want to be some kind of scientist or something, and I want to do things, and I want to help people. And I think that's what kind of person I am, or what kind of person I try to be. And that's probably how I'd describe myself. And I want to do something to help other people. (*Why is that?*) Well, because I think that this world has a lot of problems, and I think that everybody should try to help somebody else in some way, and the way I'm choosing is through science.

In the voice of the eleven-year-old boy, a familiar form of self-definition appears, resonating to the inscription of the young Stephen Daedalus in his geography book: "himself, his name and where he was," and echoing the descriptions that appear in *Our Town*, laying out across the coordinates of time and space a hierarchical order in which to define one's place. Describing himself as distinct by locating his particular position in the world, Jake sets himself apart from that world by his abilities, his beliefs, and his height. Although Amy also enumerates her likes, her wants, and her beliefs, she locates herself in relation to the world, describing herself through actions that bring her into connection with others, elaborating ties through her ability to provide help. To Jake's ideal of perfection, against which he measures the worth of himself, Amy counterposes an ideal of care, against which she measures the worth of her activity. While she places herself in relation to the world and chooses to help others

through science, he places the world in relation to himself as it defines his character, his position, and the quality of his life.

The contrast between a self defined through separation and a self delineated through connection, between a self measured against an abstract ideal of perfection and a self assessed through particular activities of care, becomes clearer and the implications of this contrast extend by considering the different ways these children resolve a conflict between responsibility to others and responsibility to self. The question about responsibility followed a dilemma posed by a woman's conflict between her commitments to work and to family relationships. While the details of this conflict color the text of Amy's response, Jake abstracts the problem of responsibility from the context in which it appears, replacing the themes of intimate relationship with his own imagery of explosive connection:

(When responsibility to oneself and responsibility to others conflict, how should one choose?)

Jake

You go about one-fourth to the others and three-fourths to yourself.

Amy

Well, it really depends on the situation. If you have a responsibility with somebody else, then you should keep it to a certain extent, but to the extent that it is really going to hurt you or stop you from doing something that you really, really want, then I think maybe you should put yourself first. But if it is your responsibility to somebody really close to you, you've just got to decide in that situation which is more important, yourself or that person, and like I said, it really depends on what kind of person you are and how you feel about the other person or persons involved.

(Why?)

Jake

Because the most important thing in your decision should be yourself, don't let yourself be guided totally by other people, but you have to take them into consideration. So, if what you want to do is blow yourself up with an atom bomb, you should maybe blow yourself up with a hand grenade because you are thinking about your neighbors who would die also.

Amy

Well, like some people put themselves and things for themselves before they put other people, and some people really care about other people. Like, I don't think your job is as important as somebody that you really love, like your husband or your parents or a very close friend. Somebody that you really care for—or if it's just your responsibility to your job or somebody that you barely know, then maybe you go first—but if it's somebody that you really love and love as much or even more than you love yourself, you've got to decide what you really love more, that person, or that thing, or yourself. (*And how do you do that?*) Well, you've got to think about it, and you've got to think about both sides, and you've got to think which would be better for everybody or better for yourself, which is more important, and which will make everybody happier. Like if the other people can get somebody else to do it, whatever it is, or don't really need you specifically, maybe it's better to do what you want, because the other people will be just fine with somebody else so they'll still be happy, and then you'll be happy too because you'll do what you want.

(What does responsibility mean?)

Jake

It means pretty much thinking of others when I do something, and like if I want to throw a rock, not throwing it at a window, because I thought of the people who would have to pay for that window, not doing it just for yourself, because you have to live with other people and live with your community, and if you do something that hurts them all, a lot of people will end up suffering, and that is sort of the wrong thing to do.

Amy

That other people are counting on you to do something, and you can't just decide, "Well, I'd rather do this or that." (*Are there other kinds of responsibility?*) Well, to yourself. If something looks really fun but you might hurt yourself doing it because you don't really know how to do it and your friends say, "Well, come on, you can do it, don't worry," if you're really scared to do it, it's your responsibility to yourself that if you think you might hurt yourself, you shouldn't do it, because you have to take care of yourself and that's your responsibility to yourself.

Again Jake constructs the dilemma as a mathematical equation, deriving a formula that guides the solution: one-fourth to others, three-fourths to yourself. Beginning with his responsibility to himself, a responsibility that he takes for granted, he then considers the extent to which he is responsible to others as well. Proceeding from a premise of separation but recognizing that “you have to live with other people,” he seeks rules to limit interference and thus to minimize hurt. Responsibility in his construction pertains to a limitation of action, a restraint of aggression, guided by the recognition that his actions can have effects on others, just as theirs can interfere with him. Thus rules, by limiting interference make life in community safe, protecting autonomy through reciprocity, extending the same consideration to others and self.

To the question about conflicting responsibilities, Amy again responds contextually rather than categorically, saying “it depends” and indicating how choice would be affected by variations in character and circumstance. Proceeding from a premise of connection, that “if you have a responsibility *with* somebody else, you should keep it,” she then considers the extent to which she has a responsibility to herself. Exploring the parameters of separation, she imagines situations where, by doing what you want, you would avoid hurting yourself or where, in doing so, you would not thereby diminish the happiness of others. To her, responsibility signifies response, an extension rather than a limitation of action. Thus it connotes an act of care rather than the restraint of aggression. Again seeking the solution that would be most inclusive of everyone’s needs, she strives to resolve the dilemma in a way that “will make everybody happier.” Since Jake is concerned with limiting interference, while Amy focuses on the need for response, for him the limiting condition is, “Don’t let yourself be guided totally by others,” but for her it arises when “other people are counting on you,” in which case “you can’t just decide, ‘Well, I’d rather do this or that.’” The interplay between these responses is clear in that she, assuming connection, begins to explore the parameters of separation, while he, assuming separation, begins to explore the parameters of connection. But the primacy of separation or connection leads to different images of self and of relationships.

Most striking among these differences is the imagery of violence in the boy’s response, depicting a world of dangerous confrontation and explosive connections, where she sees a world of care and protection, a life lived with others whom “you may love as much or even more than you love yourself.” Since the conception of morality reflects the understanding of social relationships, this difference in the imagery of relationships gives rise to a change in the moral injunction itself. To Jake, responsibility means *not*

doing what he wants because he is thinking of others; to Amy, it means *doing* what others are counting on her to do regardless of what she herself wants. Both children are concerned with avoiding hurt but construe the problem in different ways—he seeing hurt to arise from the expression of aggression, she from a failure of response.

If the trajectory of development were drawn through either of these children's responses, it would trace a correspondingly different path. For Jake, development would entail coming to see the other as equal to the self and the discovery that equality provides a way of making connection safe. For Amy, development would follow the inclusion of herself in an expanding network of connection and the discovery that separation can be protective and need not entail isolation. In view of these different paths of development and particularly of the different ways in which the experiences of separation and connection are aligned with the voice of the self, the representation of the boy's development as the single line of adolescent growth for both sexes creates a continual problem when it comes to interpreting the development of the girl.

Since development has been premised on separation and told as a narrative of failed relationships—of pre-Oedipal attachments, Oedipal fantasies, preadolescent chumships, and adolescent loves—relationships that stand out against a background of separation, only successively to erupt and give way to an increasingly emphatic individuation, the development of girls appears problematic because of the continuity of relationships in their lives. Freud attributes the turning inward of girls at puberty to an intensification of primary narcissism, signifying a failure of love or “object” relationships. But if this turning inward is construed against a background of continuing connection, it signals a new responsiveness to the self, an expansion of care rather than a failure of relationship. In this way girls, seen not to fit the categories of relationships derived from male experience, call attention to the assumptions about relationships that have informed the account of human development by replacing the imagery of explosive connection with images of dangerous separation.

The significance of this shift is revealed by a study of the images of violence that appear in stories written by college students to pictures on the TAT, a study reporting statistically significant sex differences in the places where violence is seen and in the substance of violent fantasies as well. The themes of separation and connection are central to the study, conducted by Susan Pollak and myself and based on an analysis of stories, written prior to the study, by students as a class exercise in a psychology course on motivation (Pollack and Gilligan, 1982). The study began with Pollak's observation of seemingly bizarre imagery of violence in men's stories about

a picture of what appeared to be a tranquil scene, a couple sitting on a bench by a river next to a low bridge. In response to this picture, more than 21 percent of the eighty-eight men in the class had written stories containing incidents of violence—homicide, suicide, stabbing, kidnapping, or rape. In contrast, none of the fifty women in the class had projected violence into this scene.

This observation of violence in men's stories about intimacy appeared to us as a possible corollary to Horner's (1968) report of imagery of violence in women's stories about competitive success. Horner, exemplifying her category of "bizarre or violent imagery" in depicting women's anticipation of negative consequences following success, cites a story that portrays a jubilant Anne, at the top of her medical school class, physically beaten and maimed for life by her jealous classmates. The corollary observation of violent imagery in men's fantasies of intimate relationships is illustrated by a story written by one of the men in the class to the picture of the river-bench scene:

Nick saw his life pass before his eyes. He could feel the cold penetrating ever deeper into his body. How long had it been since he had fallen through the ice—thirty seconds, a minute? It wouldn't take long for him to succumb to the chilling grip of the mid-February Charles River. What a fool he had been to accept the challenge of his roommate Sam to cross the frozen river. He knew all along that Sam hated him. Hated him for being rich and especially hated him for being engaged to Mary, Sam's childhood sweetheart. But Nick never realized until now that Mary also hated him and really loved Sam. Yet there they were, the two of them, calmly sitting on a bench in the riverbend, watching Nick drown. They'd probably soon be married, and they'd probably finance it with the life insurance policy for which Mary was the beneficiary.

Calling attention to the eye of the observer in noting where danger is seen, Pollak and I wondered whether men and women perceived danger in different situations and construe danger in different ways. Following the initial observation of violence in men's stories about intimacy we set out to discover whether there were sex differences in the distribution of violent fantasies across situations of achievement and affiliation and whether violence was differentially associated by males and females with intimacy and competitive success. The findings of the resulting images of violence study corroborate previous reports of sex differences in aggression (Terman and Tyler, 1953; Whiting and Pope, 1973; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) by

revealing a far greater incidence of violence in stories written by men. Of the eighty-eight men in the motivation class, 51 percent wrote at least one story containing images of violence, in comparison to 20 percent of the fifty women in the class, and no woman wrote more than one story in which violence appeared. But the study also revealed sex differences in the distribution and substance of violent fantasies, indicating a difference between the way in which men and women tend to imagine relationships.

Four of the six pictures that comprised the test were chosen for the purposes of this analysis since they provided clear illustrations of achievement and affiliation situations. Two of the pictures show a man and a woman in close personal affiliation—the couple on the bench in the river scene, and the two trapeze artists grasping each other's wrists, the man hanging by his knees from the trapeze and the woman in mid-air. Two pictures show people at work in impersonal achievement situations—a man sitting alone at this desk in a high-rise office building, and two women, dressed in white coats, working in a laboratory, the woman in the background watching while the woman in the foreground handles the test tubes. The study centered on a comparison between the stories written about these two sets of pictures.

The men in the class, considered as a group, projected more violence into situations of personal affiliation that they did into impersonal situations of achievement. Twenty-five percent of the men wrote violent stories only to the pictures of affiliation, 19 percent to pictures of both affiliation and achievement, and 7 percent only to pictures of achievement. In contrast, the women saw more violence in impersonal situations of achievement than in situations of affiliation; 16 percent of the women wrote violent stories to the achievement pictures and 6 percent to the pictures of affiliation.

As the story about Nick, written by a man, illustrates the association of danger with intimacy, so the story about Miss Hegstead, written by a woman, exemplifies the projection of violence into situations of achievement and the association of danger with competitive success:

Another boring day in the lab and that mean bitchy Miss Hegstead always breathing down the students' backs. Miss Hegstead has been at Needham Country High School for 40 years and every chemistry class is the same. She is watching Jane Smith, the model student in the class. She always goes over to Jane and comments to the other students that Jane is always doing the experiment right and Jane is the only student who really works hard, etc. Little does Miss Hegstead know that Jane is making some arsenic to put in her afternoon coffee.

If aggression is conceived as a response to the perception of danger, the findings of the images of violence study suggest that men and women may perceive danger in different social situations and construe danger in different ways—men seeing danger more often in close personal affiliation than in achievement and construing danger to arise from intimacy, women perceiving danger in impersonal achievement situations and construing danger to result from competitive success. The danger men describe in their stories of intimacy is a danger of entrapment or betrayal, being caught in a smothering relationship or humiliated by rejection and deceit. In contrast, the danger women portray in their tales of achievement is a danger of isolation, a fear that in standing out or being set apart by success, they will be left alone. In the story of Miss Hegstead, the only apparent cause of the violence is Jane's being singled out as the best student and thus set apart from her classmates. She retaliates by making arsenic to put in the teacher's afternoon coffee, yet all Miss Hegstead did was to praise Jane for her good work.

As people are brought closer together in the pictures, the images of violence in the men's stories increase, while as people are set further apart, the violence in the women's stories increases. The women in the class projected violence most frequently into the picture of the man at his desk (the only picture portraying a person alone), while the men in the class most often saw violence in the scene of the acrobats on the trapeze (the only picture in which people touched). Thus, it appears that men and women may experience attachment and separation in different ways and that each sex perceives a danger which the other does not see—men in connection, women in separation.

But since the women's perception of danger departs from the usual mode of expectation, the acrobats seeming to be in far greater danger than the man at his desk, their perception calls into question the usual mode of interpretation. Sex differences in aggression are usually interpreted by taking the male response as the norm, so that the absence of aggression in women is identified as the problem to be explained. However, the disparate location of violence in the stories written by women and men raises the question as to why women see the acrobats as safe.

The answer comes from the analysis of the stories about the trapeze. Although the picture of acrobats shows them performing high in the air without a net, 22 percent of the women in the study added nets in the stories they wrote. In contrast, only 6 percent of the men imagined the presence of a net, while 40 percent either explicitly mentioned the absence of a net or implied its absence by describing one or both acrobats as plummeting to their deaths. Thus, the women saw the scene on the trapeze as safe because,

by providing nets, they had made it safe, protecting the lives of the acrobats in the event of a fall. Yet failing to imagine the presence of nets in the scene on the trapeze, the men, interpreting women's responses, readily attribute the absence of violence in women's stories to a denial of danger or to a repression of aggression (May, 1981) rather than to the activities of care through which the women make the acrobats safe. As women imagine the activities through which relationships are woven and connection sustained, the world of intimacy—which appears so mysterious and dangerous to men—comes instead to appear increasingly coherent and safe.

If aggression is tied, as women perceive, to the fracture of human connection, then the activities of care, as their fantasies suggest, are the activities that make the social world safe, by avoiding isolation and preventing aggression rather than by seeking rules to limit its extent. In this light, aggression appears no longer as an unruly impulse that must be contained but rather as a signal of a fracture of connection, the sign of a failure of relationship. From this perspective, the prevalence of violence in men's fantasies, denoting a world where danger is everywhere seen, signifies a problem in making connection, causing relationships to erupt and turning separation into a dangerous isolation. Reversing the usual mode of interpretation, in which the absence of aggression in women is tied to a problem with separation, makes it possible to see the prevalence of violence in men's stories, its odd location in the context of intimate relationships, and its association with betrayal and deceit as indicative of a problem with connection that leads relationships to become dangerous and safety to appear in separation. Then rulebound competitive achievement situations, which for women threaten the web of connection, for men provide a mode of connection that establishes clear boundaries and limits aggression, and thus appears comparatively safe.

A story written by one of the women about the acrobats on the trapeze illustrates these themes, calling into question the usual opposition of achievement and affiliation by portraying the continuation of the relationship as the predicate for success:

These are two Flying Gypsies, and they are auditioning for the big job with the Ringling Brothers Circus. They are the last team to try out for the job, and they are doing very well. They have grace and style, but they use a safety net which some teams do not use. The owners say that they'll hire them if they forfeit the net, but the Gypsies decide that they would rather live longer and turn down the job than take risks like that. They know the act will be ruined if either got hurt and see no sense in taking the risk.

For the Gypsies in the story, it is not the big job with the circus that is paramount importance but rather the well-being of the two people involved. Anticipating negative consequences from a success attained at the risk of their lives, they forfeit the job rather than the net, protecting their lives but also their act, which “would be ruined if either got hurt.”

While women thus try to change the rules in order to preserve relationships, men, in abiding by these rules, depict relationships as easily replaced. Projecting most violence into this scene, they write stories about infidelity and betrayal that end with the male acrobat dropping the woman, presumably replacing the relationship and going on with the act:

The woman trapeze artist is married to the best friend of the male who has just discovered (before the show) that she has been unfaithful to his friend (her husband). He confronted her with this knowledge and told her to tell her husband but she refused. Not having the courage to confront him himself, the trapeze artist creates an accident while 100 feet about ground, letting the woman slip out of his grasp in mid-flight. She is killed in the incident but he feels no guilt, believing that he has rectified the situation.

The prevalence of violence in male fantasy, like the explosive imagery in the moral judgment of the eleven-year-old boy and the representation of theft as the way to resolve a dispute, is consonant with the view of aggression as endemic in human relationships. But these male fantasies and images also reveal a world where connection is fragmented and communication fails, where betrayal threatens because there seems to be no way of knowing the truth. Asked if he ever thinks about whether or not things are real, eleven-year-old Jake says that he wonders a lot about whether people are telling the truth, about “what people say, like one of my friends says, ‘Oh yeah, he said that,’ and sometimes I think, ‘Is he actually saying the truth?’” Considering truth to lie in math and certainty to reside in logic, he can see “no guidelines” for establishing truth in English class or in personal relationships.

Thus, although aggression has been construed as instinctual and separation has been thought necessary for its constraint, the violence in male fantasy seems rather to arise from a problem in communication and an absence of knowledge about human relationships. But as eleven-year-old Amy sets out to build connection where Kohlberg assumes it will fail, and women in their fantasies create nets of safety where men depict annihilation, the voices of women comment on the problem of aggression that both sexes face, locating the problem in the isolation of self and in the hierarchical construction of human relationships.

Freud, returning in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) to the themes of culture and morality that had preoccupied him as a youth, begins by addressing the standard of measurement, the notion of “what is of true value in life” (p. 64). Referring to a letter from Romain Rolland, who wrote that what is of ultimate comfort to a man is a “sensation of ‘eternity,’” an “oceanic” feeling, Freud, while honoring his friend, rejects this feeling as an illusion, since he cannot “discover this oceanic feeling in myself.” Describing this feeling of “an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole,” he explains that, “from my own experience I could not convince myself of the primary nature of such a feeling. But this gives me no right to deny that it does not in fact occur in other people. The only question is whether it is being correctly interpreted.” Yet raising the question of interpretation, Freud immediately dispels the problem he posed, rejecting the primacy of a feeling of connection on the grounds that “it fits in so badly with the fabric of our psychology.” On this basis, he subjects the feeling to a “psychoanalytic—that is, a genetic explanation,” deriving the feeling of connection from a more primary feeling of separation (p. 65).

The argument Freud builds centers on the “feeling of our self, of our own ego,” which “appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else.” While he then immediately points out that “such an appearance is deceptive,” the deception he sees lies not in the failure to recognize the connection between self and other, but in the failure to see the ego’s connection to the unconscious id, “for which it serves as a kind of façade.” Turning to the genetic explanation, he traces the feeling of fusion back to the infant’s failure to distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of sensation. This distinction arises through the experience of frustration when external sources of sensations evade the infant, “most of all, his mother’s breast—and only reappear as a result of his screaming for help” (pp. 65-67). In this screaming for help, Freud sees the birth of the self, the separation of ego from object that leads sensation to be located inside the self while others become objects of gratification.

This disengagement of self from the world outside, however, initiates not only the process of differentiation but also the search for autonomy, the wish to gain control over the sources and objects of pleasure in order to shore up the possibilities for happiness against the risk of disappointment and loss. Thus connection—associated by Freud with “infantile helplessness” and “limitless narcissism,” with illusion and the denial of danger—gives way to separation. Consequently, assertion, linked to aggression, becomes the basis for relationships. In this way, a primary separation, arising from disappointment and fueled by rage, creates a self whose relations

with others or “objects” must then be protected by rules, a morality that contains this explosive potential and adjusts “the mutual relationships of human beings in the family, the state and the society” (p. 86).

Yet there is an intimation on Freud’s part of a sensibility different from his own, of a mental state different from that upon which he premises his psychology, the “single exception” to the “primary mutual hostility of human beings,” to the “aggressiveness” that “forms the basis of every relation of affection and love among people,” and this exception is located in women’s experience, in “the mother’s relation to her male child” (p. 113). Once again women appear as the exception to the rule of relationships by demonstrating a love not admixed with anger, a love arising neither from separation nor from a feeling of being at one with the external world as a whole, but rather from a feeling of connection, a primary bond between other and self. But this love of the mother cannot, Freud says, be shared by the son, who would thus “make himself dependent in a most dangerous way on a portion of the external world, namely his chosen love-object, and expose himself to extreme suffering if he should be rejected by that object or lose it through unfaithfulness or death” (p. 101).

Although Freud, claiming that “we are never so defenseless against suffering as when we love” (p. 82), pursues the line of defense as it leads through anger and conscience to civilization and guilt, the more interesting question would seem to be why the mother is willing to take the risk. Since for her love also creates the possibility of disappointment and loss, the answer would seem to lie in a different experience of connection and a different mode of response. Throughout Freud’s work women remain the exception to his portrayal of relationships, and they sound a continuing theme, of an experience of love which, however described—as narcissistic or as hostile to civilization—does not appear to have separation and aggression at its base. In this alternate light, the self appears neither stranded in isolation screaming for help nor lost in fusion with the entire world as a whole, but bound in an indissoluble mode of relationship that is observably different but hard to describe.

Demonstrating a continuing sense of connection in the face of separation and loss, women illuminate an experience of self that, however, disparate from Freud’s account, speaks directly to the problem of aggression which in the end he confronts, the problem of “how to get rid of the greatest hinderance to civilization,” aggressiveness and the defences against it that “cause as much unhappiness as aggression itself” (p. 142-143). In considering this problem, Freud begins to envision its solution in a more primary sense of connection, not an oceanic feeling but an “altruistic urge” that leads to a mode of relationships with others anchored in the “wish for

union” with them. While describing the urge toward union with others as antagonistic to individual development (p. 141), Freud intimates a line of development missing from his previous account, a line that leads not through aggression to separation but through differentiation to interdependence. In calling this urge “altruistic,” Freud alludes to a different moral conception, arising not to limit aggression but to sustain connection.

Thus alongside the drama Freud creates between happiness and culture in which morality plays the central part, transforming the danger of love into the discomfort of civilization—a drama that darkly illuminates the role of “love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt” (p. 132)—another scenario begins to emerge. In this changed light, connection, rather than seeming an illusion or taking on an explosive or transcendental cast, appears as a primary feature of both individual psychology and civilized life. Since “the human individual takes part in the course of the development of mankind at the same time as he pursues his own path in life” (p. 141), separation suddenly begins to appear as illusory as connection formerly had seemed. Yet to incorporate this sense of connection into the fabric of his psychology would change, as Freud sees, not only the coloration of the instinctual life but also the representation of self and the portrayal of relationships.

The “male pattern” of fantasy that Robert May (1980) identifies as “Pride” in his studies of sex differences in projective imagination leads from enhancement to deprivation and continues the story that Freud has told of an initial fracture of connection leading through the experience of separation to an irreparable loss, a glorious achievement followed by a disastrous fall. But the pattern of female fantasy May designates as “Caring” traces a path which remains largely unexplored, a narrative of deprivation followed by enhancement in which connection, though leading through separation, in the end maintained or restored. Illuminating life as a web rather than a succession of relationships, women portray autonomy rather than attachment as the illusory and dangerous quest. In this way, women’s development points toward a different history of human attachment, stressing continuity and change in configuration, rather than replacement and separation, elucidating a different response to loss, and changing the metaphor of growth.

Jean Baker Miller (1976), enumerating the problems that arise when all affiliations are cast in the mould of dominance and subordination, suggests that “the parameters of the female’s development are not the same as the male’s and that the same terms do not apply” (p. 86). She finds in psychology no language to describe the structuring of women’s sense of self, “organized around being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and

relationships (p. 83).” But she sees in this psychic structuring the potential for “more advanced, more affiliative ways of living—less wedded to the dangerous ways of the present,” since the sense of self is tied not to a belief in the efficacy of aggression but to a recognition of the need for connection (p. 86). Thus envisioning the potential for a more creative and cooperative mode of life, Miller calls not only for social equality but also for a new language in psychology that would separate the description of care and connection from the vocabulary of inequality and oppression, and she sees this new language as originating in women’s experience of relationships.

In the absence of this language, the problem of interpretation that impedes psychologists’ understanding of women’s experience is mirrored by the problem created for women by the failure to represent their experience or by the distortion in its representation. When the interconnections of the web are dissolved by the hierarchical ordering of relationships, when nets are portrayed as dangerous entrapments, impeding flight rather than protecting against fall, women come to question whether what they have seen exists and whether what they know from their own experience is true. These questions are raised not as abstract philosophical speculations about the nature of reality and truth but as personal doubts that invade women’s sense of themselves, compromising their ability to act on their own perceptions and thus their willingness to take responsibility for what they do. This issue becomes central in women’s development during the adolescent years, when thought becomes reflective and the problem of interpretation thus enters the stream of development itself.

The two eleven-year-old children, asked to describe their experiences of moral conflict and choice, presage the themes of male and female adolescent development by recounting in one sense the same story but telling it from very different perspectives. Both children describe a situation in school where they confronted a decision of whether or not to tell. For Jake, this dilemma arose when he decided to take action against injustice and seek the enforcement of rules to protect a friend who was being “unfairly” beaten up and hurt. Having gone with his friend to inform the principal of these events, he then wonders whether or not to tell another friend that the principal was told. Since this friend only beat up the other in response to provocation, not telling would subject him to reprisals that would in his case be unjust.

In describing his dilemma, Jake focuses on whether or not it would be right in this instance to violate his standard of trying “to practice what I preach” in this case of keeping his word that that no one would know that the principal was told. The quandary hinges on whether or not he can construe his action in telling as fair, whether his various activities of care for

the two friends with whom he is involved can be reconciled with the standards of his moral belief. If he can match his action to his standard of justice, then he will not feel “ashamed” and will be “willing to own up” to what he has done, otherwise, he says, he will have to admit to himself and his friends that he has made a mistake.

Amy’s dilemma stems from the fact that she saw one friend take a book that belonged to another. Construing the problem as a conflict in loyalties, an issue of responsiveness in relationship, she wonders whether to risk hurting one friend in responding to the hurt of another. Her question is how to act, given what she has seen and knows, since in her construction, not telling as well as telling constitutes a response. As Jake considers violating his standards and going back on his word, compromising his principles out of loyalty to a friend, Amy considers stepping apart from a friendship to assert a standard in which she believes, a standard of sharing and care, of protecting people from hurt. But given this standard, she thinks about the extent to which either friend will be hurt and focuses on the parameters of the situation in order to assess what the likely consequences of her action will be. Just as Jake wonders whether in acting out of friendship he will violate his personal integrity, so Amy worries whether in asserting her beliefs, she will hurt a friend.

In describing her thinking about what to do, Amy recreates the inner dialogue of voices to which she attends—a dialogue that includes the voices of others and also the voice of herself:

Nobody will ever know I saw, and nobody will hold it against me, but then you start sitting there thinking about it and think that somebody will always know—you’ll always know that you never told, and it makes me feel really bad because my friend is sitting there. “Has anybody see my book? Where is it? Help! I need my book for the next class. Help! It’s not here. Where is it?” And I think if you know that, it is more important to tell, and you know you’re not really tattling or anything, because it’s better, you know, to tell.

Just as her awareness of the other’s cry for help makes the failure to tell a failure to care, so telling is not tattling when placed in *this* context of relationships. But this contextual mode of analysis leads interpretation readily to shift, since a change in the context of relationships would turn her act of care into an act of betrayal.

In this way, realizing that others may not know what she has seen and heard and recognizing how easily her action can be misconstrued, Amy wonders if it would be better to say nothing or at least not to tell that she

told. Thus if the secrets of male adolescence revolve around the harboring of continuing attachments that cannot be represented in the logic of fairness, the secrets of the female adolescent pertain to the silencing of her own voice, a silencing enforced by the wish not to hurt others but also by the fear that, in speaking, her voice will not be heard.

With this silence, the imagery of the Persephone myth returns, charting the mysterious disappearance of the female self in adolescence by mapping an underground world kept secret because it is branded by others as selfish and wrong. When the experience of self and the understanding or morality change with the growth of reflective thought in adolescence, questions about identity and morality converge on the issue of interpretation. As the eleven-year-old girl's question of whether or not to listen to herself extends across the span of adolescence, the difficulty experienced by psychologists in listening to women is compounded by women's difficulty in listening to themselves. This difficulty is evident in a young woman's account of her crisis of identity and moral belief—a crisis that centers on her struggle to disentangle her voice from the voices of others and to find a language that represents her experience of relationships and her sense of herself.

Claire, a participant in the college student study, was interviewed first as a senior in college and then again at the age of twenty-seven. When asked, as a senior, how she would describe herself to herself, she answers "confused," saying that she "should be able to say, 'Well, I'm such and such,'" but instead she finds herself "more unsure now than I think I have ever been." Aware that "people see me in a certain way," she has come to find these images contradictory and constraining, "kind of found myself being pushed, being caught in the middle: I should be a good mother and daughter; I should be, as a college woman, aggressive and high-powered and career-oriented." Yet as the feeling of being caught in the middle has turned, in her senior year, into a sense of being constrained to act, of "being pushed to start making decisions for myself," she has "come to realize that all these various roles just aren't exactly right." Thus she concludes:

I am not necessarily the type of girlfriend I should be or that I've been perceived as, and I'm not necessarily the type of daughter that I've been perceived as. You grow up to find yourself in the way other people see you, and it's very hard, all of a sudden, to start separating this and start realizing that really nobody else can make these decisions.

Faced as a senior with the need to make a choice about what to do the following year, she attempts to separate her perception of herself from the

perceptions of others, to see herself directly rather than in reflection through others' eyes:

For a long time, I was seeing myself as other people wanted to see me. I mean, it really appealed to my boyfriend to have a wife who was a professor of English, and I was kind of pushing it back in my mind that I didn't want to do this; I really felt maybe this is what I really wanted to do. I started seeing all the positive sides of it because I was seeing it through his eyes, and then, suddenly, I kind of realized, I can't do this anymore. And I can't, you know, I've got to stop this and see myself as I want to see *it*, and then I realized that no, this is very stuffy, and this world of academia isn't necessarily *right for me*, even though I would be the ideal wife in that situation. So then I am naturally faced with what is right for me, and it's very hard, because at the same time, I'm faced with a feeling that I can't grow up.

Thus, as her way of looking at herself becomes more direct, the moral question correspondingly shifts from what is "right" to what is "right for me." Yet in facing that challenge, she immediately draws back as she encounters the feeling "that I can't grow up."

Caught by the interviewer's request for self-description at a time when she is resisting "categorizing or classifying myself," she finds it "hard to start defining what I'm in the process of undefining," the self that, in the past, would "try to push my feelings under the rug" so as not to create any "repercussions." Describing herself as "loving," she is caught between the two contexts in which that term now applies: an underground world that sets her "apart from others, apart from their definitions of me," and a world of connections that set her apart from herself. In trying to explain her sense of herself as at once separate and connected, she encounters a problem with "terminology" when trying to convey a new understanding of both self and relationship:

I'm trying to tell you two things. I'm trying to be myself alone, apart from others, apart from their definitions of me, and yet at the same time I'm doing just the opposite, trying to be with or relate to—whatever the terminology is—I don't think they are mutually exclusive.

In this way she ties a new sense of separation to a new experience of connection, a way of being with others that allows her also to be with herself.

Reaching for an image that would convey this uncharted sense of connection but unable to find one herself, she seizes on one offered by a friend, the character of Gudrun in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*. The

image of Gudrun evokes for Claire her sense of being “childish” and “untamed,” responsive to the sensuality both in nature and in herself. This connection to the world of “sensual enjoyment” represents the “artistic and bohemian” side of herself and contrasts with the view of herself as “ladylike and well brought-up.” Yet the image of Gudrun, despite its evocation of a different form of connection, is in the end morally problematic for her because it implies being “uncaring of others.”

Again Claire is caught, but in a different way, not between the contradictory expectations of others but between a responsiveness to others and to herself. Sensing that these modes of response “aren’t mutually exclusive,” she examines the moral judgment that in the past kept them apart. Formerly, she considered “a moral way of looking” to be one that focused on “responsibility to others”; now she has come to question what seemed in the past a self-evident truth, that “in doing what’s right for others, you’re doing what’s right for yourself.” She has, “reached the point where I don’t think I can be any good to anyone unless I know who I am.”

In the process of seeking to “discover what’s me,” she has begun to “get rid of all these labels and things I just don’t see on my own,” to separate her perceptions from her former mode of interpretation and to look more directly at others as well as herself. Thus, she has come to observe “faults” in her mother, who she perceives as endlessly giving, “because she doesn’t care if she hurts herself in doing it. She doesn’t realize—well, she does realize, that in hurting herself, she hurts people very close to her.” Measured against a standard of care, Claire’s ideal of self-sacrifice gives way to a vision of “a family where everyone is encouraged to become an individual and at the same time everybody helps others and receives help from them.”

Bringing this perspective to Heinz’s dilemma, Claire identifies the same moral problem as the eleven-year-old Amy, focusing not on the conflict of rights but on the failure of response. Claire believes that Heinz should steal the drug (“His wife’s life was much more important than anything. He should have done anything to save her life.”), but she counters the rights construction with her own interpretation. Although the druggist “had a right, I mean he had the legal right, I also think he had the moral obligation to show compassion in this case. I don’t think he had the right to refuse.” In tying the necessity for Heinz’s action to the fact that “the wife needed him at this point to do it; she couldn’t have done it and it’s up to him to do for her what she needs,” Claire elaborates the same concept of responsibility that was articulated by Amy. They both equate responsibility with the need for response that arises from the recognition that others are counting on you and that you are in a position to help.

Whether Heinz loves his wife or not is irrelevant to Claire's decision, not because life has priority over affection, but because his wife "is another human being who needs help." Thus the moral injunction to act stems not from Heinz's feelings about his wife but from his awareness of her need, an awareness mediated not by identification but by a process of communication. Just as Claire considers the druggist morally responsible for his refusal, so she ties morality to the awareness of connection, defining the moral person as one who, in acting, "seriously considers the consequences to everybody involved." Therefore, she criticizes her mother for "neglecting her responsibility to herself" at the same time she criticizes herself for neglecting her responsibility to others.

Although Claire's judgments of Heinz's dilemma for the most part do not fit the categories of Kohlberg's scale, her understanding of the law and her ability to articulate its function in a systematic way earn her a moral maturity score of stage four. Five years later, when she is interviewed at the age of twenty-seven, this score is called into question because she subsumes the law to the considerations of responsibility that informed her thinking about the druggist, Heinz, and his wife. Judging the law now in terms of whom it protects, she extends the ethic of responsibility to a broader vision of societal connection. But the disparity between this vision and the justice conception causes her score on Kohlberg's scale to regress.

During the time when Claire's moral judgments appeared to regress, her moral crisis was resolved. Having taken Kohlberg's course, she suspected that what she had experienced as growth was not progress in his terms. Thus, when she received the letter asking if she would be willing to be interviewed again, she thought:

My God, what if I have regressed. It seems to me that at one stage of my life, I would have been able to answer these dilemmas with a lot more surety and said, "Yes, this is absolutely right and this is absolutely wrong." And I am just sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of uncertainty. I am not sure if that is good or bad at this point, but I think there has been, in that sense, a direction.

Contrasting an absolute standard of judgment with her own experience of the complexity of moral choice, she introduces the question of direction, the interpretation of her own development.

The question of interpretation recurs throughout the text of her interview at age twenty-seven when, married and about to start medical school, she reflects on her experience of crisis and describes the changes in her life and thought. Speaking of the present, she says that "things have fallen into place," but immediately corrects her phrasing since "that sounds like

somebody else put them together, and that's not what happened." The problem of interpretation, however, centers on describing the mode of connection. The connection itself is apparent in Claire's description of herself which she says, "sounds sort of strange," as she characterizes herself as "maternal, with all its connotations." Envisioning herself "as a physician, as a mother," she says that "it's hard for me to think about myself without thinking about other people around me that I am giving to." Like Amy, Claire ties her experience of self to activities of care and connection. Joining the image of her mother with that of herself, she sees herself as a maternal physician, as preparing, like Amy, to become a scientist who takes care of the world.

In describing the resolution of a crisis that extended over a period of years, she retraces her steps in order to explain her discovery of "a direction underlying it all." The crisis began in her sophomore year in college:

For an entire weekend I didn't get out of bed because there was no reason to. I just couldn't bring myself to get out of bed. I didn't know what I would do if I got out of bed, but most of my sophomore year was like that. I didn't know what I was doing, what the reason for doing anything was. Nothing seemed to connect together.

Tying her despair to her sense of disconnection, she casts about for a word or image to fit the experience:

It wasn't a turning point in that, when I got out of bed, everything was right again. That didn't happen. It wasn't a great epiphany or anything like that. It just sticks out in my mind, even though at the time it didn't seem like a powerful experience. It did not seem like anything was happening to me. No. It seems like it was a very powerful experience. It was real.

In measuring her own experience against existing metaphors of crisis and change, she begins to conclude that nothing had happened, or that what happened was not powerful or real. She did not hit rock bottom, nor did she experience an epiphany or "ultimate despair":

I didn't lie in bed and think my life so totally worthless. It wasn't that. It wasn't like profound unhappiness. It was just nothing. Maybe that is the ultimate despair, but you don't feel it at the time. I guess that sticks out as one thing because it was so devoid of feeling. Another thing was the extreme bitterness and extreme hatred I felt toward [a relative] who abandoned the family. I mean it was just the opposite; it was so intense.

Finding, in both the absence of feeling and in the presence of hatred, no way to connect with others, she interprets her experience of despair as arising from the sense of disconnection that ensued, in part, from the failure of family relationships.

The feeling of disconnection from others leads Claire to struggle to see herself as “worthwhile,” as worthy of her own care and thus justified in acting on her own behalf. As she describes the process through which she came to risk doing what she wanted to do, she indicates how in this process her conception of morality changed. Whereas she used to define the good person as “the person who does the most good for others,” now she ties morality to the understanding that arises from the experience of relationship, since she considers the capacity “to understand what someone else is experiencing” as the prerequisite for moral response.

Impatient now with Heinz’s dilemma, she structures it starkly as a contrast between the wife’s life and the druggist’s greed, seeing in the druggist’s preoccupation with profit a failure of understanding as well as response. Life is worth more than money because “everybody has the right to live.” but then she shifts her perspective, saying, “I’m not sure I should phrase it that way.” In her rephrasing, she replaces the hierarchy of rights with a web of relationships. Through this replacement, she challenges the premise of separation underlying the notion of rights and articulates a “guiding principle of connection.” Perceiving relationships as primary rather than as derived from separation, considering the interdependence of people’s lives, she envisions “the way things are” and “the way things should be” as a web of interconnection where “everybody belongs to it and you all come from it.” Against this conception of social reality, the druggist’s claim stands in fundamental contradiction. Seeing life as dependent on connection, as sustained by activities of care, as based on a bond of attachment rather than a contract of agreement, she believes that Heinz should steal the drug, whether or not he loves his wife, “by virtue of the fact that they are both there.” Although a person may not like someone else, “you have to love someone else, because you are inseparable from them. In a way it’s like loving your right hand; it is a part of you. That other person is part of that giant collection of everybody.” Thus she articulates an ethic of responsibility that stems from an awareness of interconnection: “The stranger is still another person belonging to that group, people you are connected to by virtue of being another person.”

Claire describes morality as “the constant tension between being part of something larger and a sort of self-contained entity,” and she sees the ability to live with that tension as the source of moral character and strength. This tension is at the center of the moral dilemmas she has faced which

were conflicts of responsibility that pertained to an issue of truth and turned on the recognition of relationship. The problem of truth became apparent to her when, after college, she worked as a counselor in an abortion clinic and was told that, if a woman wanted to see what was evacuated from her uterus, she should be told, “You can’t see anything now. It just looks like jelly at this point.” Since this description clashed with the moral turmoil Claire felt while working at the clinic, she decided that she “had to face up to what was going on. Thus, she decided to look at a fetus evacuated in a late abortion, and in doing so, she came to the realization that:

I just couldn’t kid myself anymore and say there was nothing in the uterus, just a tiny speck. This is not true, and I knew it wasn’t true, but I sort of had to see it. And yet at the same time I knew that’s what was going on. I also believed that it was right; it should have happened. But I couldn’t say, “Well, this is right and this is wrong.” I was just constantly torn.

When she measured the world by eye and relied on her perceptions in defining what was happening and what was true, the absolutes of moral judgment dissolved. As a result, she was “constantly torn” and mired in uncertainty with respect to the issue of abortion, but she was also able to act in a more responsible way:

I struggled with it a whole lot. Finally, I just had to reconcile myself—I really do believe this, but it is not an easy thing that you can say without emotions and maybe regret—that, yes, life is sacred, but the quality of life is also important, and it has to be the determining thing in this particular case. The quality of that mother’s life, the quality of an unborn child’s life—I have seen too many pictures of babies in trash cans and that sort of thing, and it is too easy to say, “Well, either/or,” and it just isn’t like that. And I had to be able to say, “Yes, this is killing, there is no way around it, but I am willing to accept that, but I am willing to go ahead with it, and it’s hard.” I don’t think I can explain it. I don’t think I can really verbalize the justification.

Claire’s inability to articulate her moral position stems in part from the fact that hers is a contextual judgment, bound to the particulars of time and place, contingent always on “that mother” and that “unborn child” and thus resisting a categorical formulation. To her, the possibilities of imagination outstrip the capacity for generalization. But this sense of being unable to verbalize or explain the rationale for her participation in abortion counseling, an inability that could reflect the inadequacy of her moral thought, could also reflect the fact that she finds in the world no validation of the

position she is trying to convey, a position that is neither pro-life nor pro-choice but based on a recognition of the continuing connection between the life of the mother and the life of the child.

Thus Claire casts the dilemma not as a contest of rights but as a problem of relationships, centering on a question of responsibility which in the end must be faced. If attachment cannot be sustained, abortion may be the better solution, but in either case morality lies in recognizing connection, taking responsibility for the abortion decision or taking responsibility for the care of the child. Although there are times when “killing like that is necessary, it shouldn’t become too easy,” as it does “if it is removed from you. If the fetus is just jelly, that is removed from you. Southeast Asia is further removed from you.” Thus morality and the preservation of life are contingent on sustaining connection, seeing the consequences of action by keeping the web of relationships intact, “not allowing somebody else to do the killing for you without taking the responsibility.” Again an absolute judgment yields to the complexity of relationships. The fact that life is sustained by connection leads her to affirm the “sacred tie” of life rather than “the sacredness of life at all costs,” and to articulate an ethic of responsibility while remaining cognizant of the issue of rights.

The problem of truth also arose for Claire when a friend asked her to write a peer recommendation for a job, creating a dilemma similar to the one Amy described. While Amy wondered whether “to keep friendship or keep justice,” though in the end the question became one of responding to others and thus keeping peace with herself, the matter of honesty was from the beginning at the center of Claire’s concern: “How could I be honest and at the same time do her justice?” But the issue of justice was an issue of responsibility, arising from the recognition that her actions in forming the friendship had set up a chain of expectations, leading her friend to believe that she could count on Claire for help. Claire, realizing that she “really didn’t like” her friend and that their value systems were “very different,” also recognized the reality of the relationship and the impossibility of being both honest and fair. The question of what to do hinged on a judgment of the relative hurt her actions would cause, to the friend and to the people whose lives would be affected if the friend succeeded in getting the job. Deciding that in this situation, writing the letter was the better solution, she realized the dilemma could have been avoided by “being a little more honest with her from day one.”

With the question of honesty, Claire comes in the end to the drama of “Mr. Right” and “Mr. Wrong,” a drama that joins the various themes of relationship, responsibility, and interpretation by personalizing the question of moral truth rather than objectifying the issue of personal relationships.

Mr. Right, like Anne in Horner's story, was at the top of his medical school class and "hated not to have all his Sunday to study," given his wish to stay at the top. Consequently, on Saturday nights he would return to sleep on his own bed, leaving Claire feeling not only alone and abandoned but also "selfish" and "wrong":

What is wrong with me that I want more? There is obviously something. I am a terribly selfish person, and I never really faced the fact that there was something obviously wrong with the relationship.

As a result of this experience, she began to suspect the Mr. Right was not "right for me." But unwilling to end the relationship she turned instead to Mr. Wrong:

By senior year, it just blew, but instead of saying, "I am asserting myself, I am not going to stand for this any longer," I had this very sordid affair behind his back and then threw it up to him. And not only threw it up to him, but went to him in tears and confessed, which felt wonderful, but it was all sort of subconsciously calculated to hurt him.

Claire first describes the conflict or the dilemma as a disparity between judgment and action, given her "very strict kind of in a funny way monogamous feelings," but then adds that the real conflict was between two images of herself, "this virginal pure thing and this other side of myself that was sort of starting to blossom." The problem arose because she "was not able to make a decision at that point of what I wanted to do." Stranded between two images of herself, she was caught between two worlds of relationship:

I was not willing to give up the first relationship because it represented a lot of things. This was Mr. Right to everybody else but me who knew better. And the other guy, who clearly was, in contrast, Mr. Wrong, sort of represented that same sort of animal thing to me at that time, and I wasn't able to give that up either.

As she began to confront the disparity within her perception of herself, she also began "to see that moral standards imposed by somebody else aren't necessarily right for me." Thus, as Mr. Right turned out not to be right, so Mr. Wrong was not so wrong.

Focusing on her actions that revealed the unresolved conflict within herself, she says that "the two people involved in that conflict were myself and myself." As she explores the inner division, she explores the world of relationships as well, identifying her unwillingness to "take responsibility for my actions" as having perpetuated a cycle of hurt:

That was part of the whole problem with the relationship, my not taking responsibility for my part of it. It was also, I think, sort of designed to hurt him as deeply as he hurt me, even though I had never taken the responsibility for having him stop hurting me. I never said, "You stay here this Saturday or else this is the end of the relationship." Only two or three years later did I realize what was going on.

Claire, looking back on the dilemma of Mr. Right and Mr. Wrong, locates the problem not only in her failure to assert herself but also in "not understanding that I *should* be asserting myself." But the act of assertion is an act not of aggression but rather of communication. By telling Mr. Right the truth about herself, she would not only have prevented aggression but also have provided an opportunity for response. As the "I" who spoke clearly at eleven becomes in adolescence "confused," so the resolution of that confusion occurs through the discovery that responsiveness to self and responsiveness to others are connected rather than opposed.

Describing the people whom she admires—her mother for being "as giving as she is," her husband who "lives by what he believes"—Claire envisions for herself a life of integrity centered on activities of care. This vision is illuminated by the actions of a woman physician who, seeing the loneliness of an old woman in the hospital, "would go out and buy her a root beer float and sit at her bedside just so there would be somebody there for her." The ideal of care is thus an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone.

While the truths of psychological theory have blinded psychologists to the truth of women's experience, that experience illuminates a world which psychologists have found hard to trace, a territory where violence is rare and relationships appear safe. The reason women's experience has been so difficult to decipher or even discern is that a shift in the imagery of relationships gives rise to a problem of interpretation. The images of hierarchy and web, drawn from the texts of men's and women's fantasies and thoughts, convey different ways of structuring relationships and are associated with different views of morality and self. But these images create a problem in understanding because each distorts the other's representation. As the top of the hierarchy becomes the edge of the web and as the center of a network of connection becomes the middle of a hierarchical progression, each image marks as dangerous the place which the other defines as safe. Thus the images of hierarchy and web inform different modes of assertion and response: the wish to be alone at the top and the consequent fear that others will get too close; the wish to be at the center of

connection and the consequent fear of being too far out on the edge. These disparate fears of being stranded and being caught give rise to different portrayals of achievement and affiliation, leading to difficult modes of action and different ways of assessing the consequences of choice.

The reinterpretation of women's experience in terms of their own imagery of relationships thus clarifies that experience and also provides a non-hierarchical vision of human connection. Since relationships, when cast in the image of hierarchy, appear inherently unstable and morally problematic, their transposition into the image of web changes an order of inequality into a structure interconnection. But the power of the images of hierarchy and web, their evocation of feelings and their recurrence in thought, signifies the embeddedness of both of these images in the cycle of human life. The experiences of inequality and interconnection, inherent in the relation of parent and child, then give rise to the ethics of justice and care, the ideals of human relationship—the vision that self and other will be treated as if equal worth, that despite differences in power, things will be fair; the vision that everyone will be responded to and included, that no one will be left alone or hurt. These disparate visions in their tension reflect the paradoxical truths of human experience—that we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others, and that we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self.
